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MAR 06 2006

In the Claims

The status of the claims is as follows:

1 1. [Currently amended] A method for providing procurement
2 services to a plurality of customer companies with complex
3 accounting rules while providing secure information viewing
4 in support of said customer companies, said customer
5 companies being organized in a plurality of customer company
6 groups and procurement coalitions for volume discounts and
7 access to shared contracts with respect to a plurality of
8 vendors, with procurement contracts leveraged across company
9 groups, comprising the steps of:

10 providing a front end requisition and catalog server
11 for providing a user interface to a user at a customer
12 company browser to access catalogs and commodities
13 managed by said enterprise and for providing approval
14 notices and receiving approve/reject data with respect
15 to customer approvers;

16 inputs to said front end requisition and catalog
17 server from an enterprise procurement services
18 system including requisition status, purchase
19 order status and contracts, cost centers, currency
20 exchange rates, general ledger accounts, purchase
21 order history invoices, purchase order history
22 receipts, and confirmations; outputs from said
23 requisition and catalog server to said procurement
24 services system including requisitions and
25 positive confirmation responses;

END920000176US1

2

S/N 09/815,312

26 inputs to said front end requisition and catalog
27 server from said customer company browser
28 including submit requisition; outputs from said
29 requisition and catalog server to said customer
30 company browser including approval/rejection
31 notices, status display, and negative and positive
32 confirmations; with notice and response data being
33 exchanged between said requisition and catalog
34 server and browser;

35 inputs to said front end requisition and catalog
36 server from a vendor system including vendor
37 catalogs via an enterprise electronic data
38 interchange application;

39 inputs to said front end requisition and catalog
40 server from an enterprise requisition and catalog
41 system including postal code validation data;

42 inputs to said front end requisition and catalog
43 server including human resource extract data from
44 an enterprise hub server;

45 providing said enterprise procurement services system
46 managed by said enterprise for accepting requisitions
47 from said front end requisition and catalog server
48 entered by said user and responsive thereto for causing
49 said electronic data interchange application to
50 generate transactions to said vendors and for
51 generating accounting transactions to a leveraged
52 procurement network data warehouse facility for said
53 requisitions;

END920000176US1

3

S/N 09/815,312

54 inputs to said enterprise procurement services
55 system from said front end requisition and catalog
56 server including requisitions and positive
57 confirmation responses; and outputs to said front
58 end requisition and catalog server from said
59 enterprise procurement services system including
60 requisition status data, purchase order status and
61 contracts data, cost center data, currency
62 exchange rates, general ledger accounts, purchase
63 order history invoices, purchase order history
64 receipts, and order confirmations;

65 inputs to said enterprise procurement services
66 system from said enterprise hub server including
67 cost center data; and outputs to said hub server
68 from said enterprise procurement services system
69 including a company process control table, vendor
70 master updates, and accounting detail;

71 inputs to said enterprise procurement services
72 system from said electronic data interchange
73 application including purchase order
74 acknowledgments, invoices, payment status and file
75 transfer check reconstructions; and outputs from
76 said enterprise procurement services system to
77 said electronic data interchange application
78 including purchase orders, invoice rejections and
79 payments;

80 inputs to said enterprise procurement services
81 system from operator terminals including process
82 purchase orders, requests for quotes, and

END920000176US1

4

S/N 09/815,312

83 contracts data, create/change vendor master data,
84 invoice processing; payment proposal data, and
85 payment post and print;

86 inputs to said enterprise procurement services
87 system including currency exchange rate data from
88 an external financial services server; and output
89 from said enterprise procurement services system
90 to vendors including paper and fax purchase order
91 documents;

92 inputs to said enterprise electronic data
93 interchange application from said vendor including
94 purchase acknowledgments and invoices, and outputs
95 from said electronic data interchange application
96 to said vendor including purchase orders and
97 invoice rejections;

98 inputs to said enterprise electronic data
99 interchange application including payments from a
100 payment source and outputs from said enterprise
101 electronic data interchange application including
102 payments to customer electronic data interchange
103 applications;

104 providing said leveraged procurement network hosted
105 data warehouse facility for storing and monitoring said
106 electronic data interchange transactions and accounting
107 transactions;

108 providing said enterprise hub server for transferring
109 data between said front end requisition and catalog

END920000176US1

5

S/N 09/815,312

110 server, said back-end purchasing system, and said data
111 warehouse facility;

112 inputs to said enterprise procurement services hub
113 server from said enterprise procurement services
114 system including company process control table,
115 vendor master updates and accounting detail;

116 outputs from said enterprise procurement services
117 hub server including human resource extract data,
118 extracted from customer employee data, to customer
119 requisition and catalog system;

120 outputs from said enterprise procurement services
121 hub server to a customer back-end purchasing
122 system including vendor master data, invoice
123 detail, payment detail and bank clearing detail
124 data;

125 inputs to said enterprise procurement services hub
126 server further including cost centers data;

127 said customer back-end purchasing system also
128 receiving goods receipts from customer receiving;

129 establishing in a computer database a user profile for
130 associating acceptable accounting and system controls
131 to each person authorized by a customer company to
132 access said procurement services;

133 associating each said company with a company group of
134 related companies;

END920000176US1

6

S/N 09/815,312

135 providing common code defining workflow components
136 common to all companies within said company group,
137 including accounting validation and approval
138 processing;

139 specifying in said user profile for each said user a
140 user company and company group so as to define said
141 controls based on company and company group by

142 collecting in said user profile each of a
143 plurality of users into a user profile table
144 associating acceptable accounting and system
145 controls for each person authorized by a customer
146 company to access procurement services for
147 leveraging access and maintaining isolation of
148 data by identifying a user at log on as associated
149 with a particular company group;

150 providing in a hub server a company group human
151 resources file connected through a fire wall to a
152 requisition and catalog server for creating and
153 maintaining said user profile table;

154 said procurement services including process
155 requirements and data resources accessible only to
156 those users identified in their profiles as
157 members of a particular company and, therefore,
158 company group and including catalogs, contracts,
159 cost centers defining departments that can be
160 charged, a chart of accounts defining general
161 ledger account codes, entries in said user profile
162 table, business rules and defaults including those

END920000176US1

7

S/N 09/815,312

163 affiliated with accounting and specifying fields
164 that must be completed in creating a requisition
165 and default data to be entered in those fields;

166 providing in each entry for a user in said user
167 profile a company group code, a company code, a
168 plant code specifying ship to location, an
169 employee serial number, and an E-mail address;

170 using said company group code and said
171 company code responsive to user login to
172 associate said user with a given company in a
173 company group for

174 responsive to user selection of a shop-
175 from-a-catalog button on a user browser,
176 controlling catalog application code to
177 display to said user only those catalogs
178 for which a corresponding catalog
179 profile includes said user's company in
180 said resource a resource profile;

181 specifying departments that can be
182 charged across companies in a company
183 group;

184 selectively allowing a user to initiate
185 requests for other users, view general
186 ledger account codes associated with
187 commodity codes by company group,
188 company group specific business rules
189 including accounting business rule

END920000176US1

8

S/N 09/815,312

190 defaults specifying fields required to
191 be filled in by said user based on item
192 being bought;

193 said resource profile providing for each procurement
194 resource to be shared among said users ~~a resource~~
195 ~~profile in~~ a computer database specifying for each
196 resource those said companies to have access to and
197 share said procurement resource; and

198 responsive to said user profile and said resource
199 profiles, controlling user access to said procurement
200 resources.

2-11. [Canceled]

1 12. [Currently amended] System for providing procurement
2 services by an enterprise to a plurality of customer
3 companies with complex accounting rules while providing
4 secure information viewing in support of said customer
5 companies, said customer companies being organized in a
6 plurality of customer company groups and procurement
7 coalitions for volume discounts and access to shared
8 contracts with respect to a plurality of vendors, with
9 procurement contracts leveraged across company groups,
10 comprising:

11 a front end requisition and catalog server for
12 providing a user interface to a user at a customer
13 company browser to access catalogs and commodities
14 managed by said enterprise and for providing approval

END920000176US1

9

S/N 09/815,312

15 notices and receiving approve/reject data with respect
16 to customer approvers;

17 inputs to said front end requisition and catalog
18 server from an enterprise procurement services
19 system including requisition status, purchase
20 order status and contracts, cost centers, currency
21 exchange rates, general ledger accounts, purchase
22 order history invoices, purchase order history
23 receipts, and confirmations; outputs from said
24 requisition and catalog server to said procurement
25 services system including requisitions and
26 positive confirmation responses;

27 inputs to said front end requisition and catalog
28 server from said customer company browser
29 including submit requisition; outputs from said
30 requisition and catalog server to said customer
31 company browser including approval/rejection
32 notices, status display, and negative and positive
33 confirmations; with notice and response data being
34 exchanged between said requisition and catalog
35 server and browser;

36 inputs to said front end requisition and catalog
37 server from a vendor system including vendor
38 catalogs via an enterprise electronic data
39 interchange application;

40 inputs to said front end requisition and catalog
41 server from an enterprise requisition and catalog
42 system including postal code validation data;

END920000176US1

10

S/N 09/815,312

43 inputs to said front end requisition and catalog
44 server including human resource extract data from
45 an enterprise hub server;

46 said enterprise procurement services system managed by
47 said enterprise for accepting requisitions from said
48 front end requisition and catalog server entered by
49 said user and responsive thereto for causing said
50 electronic data interchange application to generate
51 transactions to said vendors and for generating
52 accounting transactions to a leveraged procurement
53 network data warehouse facility for said requisitions;

54 inputs to said enterprise procurement services
55 system from said front end requisition and catalog
56 server including requisitions and positive
57 confirmation responses; and outputs to said front
58 end requisition and catalog server from said
59 enterprise procurement services system including
60 requisition status data, purchase order status and
61 contracts data, cost center data, currency
62 exchange rates, general ledger accounts, purchase
63 order history invoices, purchase order history
64 receipts, and order confirmations;

65 inputs to said enterprise procurement services
66 system from said enterprise hub server including
67 cost center data; and outputs to said hub server
68 from said enterprise procurement services system
69 including a company process control table, vendor
70 master updates, and accounting detail;

END920000176US1

11

S/N 09/815,312

71 inputs to said enterprise procurement services
72 system from said electronic data interchange
73 application including purchase order
74 acknowledgments, invoices, payment status and file
75 transfer check reconstructions; and outputs from
76 said enterprise procurement services system to
77 said electronic data interchange application
78 including purchase orders, invoice rejections and
79 payments;

80 inputs to said enterprise procurement services
81 system from operator terminals including process
82 purchase orders, requests for quotes, and
83 contracts data, create/change vendor master data,
84 invoice processing, payment proposal data, and
85 payment post and print;

86 inputs to said enterprise procurement services
87 system including currency exchange rate data from
88 an external financial services server; and output
89 from said enterprise procurement services system
90 to vendors including paper and fax purchase order
91 documents;

92 inputs to said enterprise electronic data
93 interchange application from said vendor including
94 purchase acknowledgments and invoices, and outputs
95 from said electronic data interchange application
96 to said vendor including purchase orders and
97 invoice rejections;

98 inputs to said enterprise electronic data

END920000176US1

12

S/N 09/815,312

99 interchange application including payments from a
100 payment source and outputs from said enterprise
101 electronic data interchange application including
102 payments to customer electronic data interchange
103 applications;

104 said leveraged procurement network hosted data
105 warehouse facility for storing and monitoring said
106 electronic data interchange transactions and accounting
107 transactions;

108 said enterprise hub server for transferring data
109 between said front end requisition and catalog server,
110 said back-end purchasing system, and said data
111 warehouse facility;

112 inputs to said enterprise procurement services hub
113 server from said enterprise procurement services
114 system including company process control table,
115 vendor master updates and accounting detail;

116 outputs from said enterprise procurement services
117 hub server including human resource extract data,
118 extracted from customer employee data, to customer
119 requisition and catalog system;

120 outputs from said enterprise procurement services
121 hub server to a customer back-end purchasing
122 system including vendor master data, invoice
123 detail, payment detail and bank clearing detail
124 data;

END920000176US1

13

S/N 09/815,312

125 inputs to said enterprise procurement services hub
126 server further including cost centers data;

127 said customer back-end purchasing system also
128 receiving goods receipts from customer receiving;

129 said requisition and catalog server including a user
130 profile table, a company group human resources file, a
131 new employee profile build application, a table build
132 application and a plurality of procurement resources;

133 said user profile table associating acceptable
134 accounting and system controls for each person
135 authorized by a customer company to access said
136 procurement services for leveraging access and
137 maintaining isolation of data by identifying a
138 user at log on as associated with a particular
139 company group;

140 said hub server including a company group human
141 resources file connected through a fire wall to
142 said requisition and catalog server for creating
143 and maintaining said user profile table;

144 said procurement resources including process
145 requirements and data resources accessible only to
146 those users identified in their profiles as
147 members of a particular company and, therefore,
148 company group and including catalogs, contracts,
149 cost centers defining departments that can be
150 charged, a chart of accounts defining general
151 ledger account codes, entries in said user profile

END920000176US1

14

S/N 09/815,312

152 table, business rules and defaults including those
153 affiliated with accounting and specifying fields
154 that must be completed in creating a requisition
155 and default data to be entered in those fields;

156 each entry for a user in said user profile
157 including company group code, company code, plant
158 code specifying ship to location, employee serial
159 number, and E-mail address;

160 said company group code and said company code
161 being operable responsive to user login to
162 associate said user with a given company in a
163 company group, thereby

164 responsive to user selection of a shop-
165 from-a-catalog button on a user browser
166 controlling catalog application code to
167 display to said user only those catalogs
168 for which a corresponding catalog
169 profile includes said user's company in
170 said in a resource profile;

171 specifying departments that can be
172 charged across companies in a company
173 group;

174 selectively allowing a user to initiate
175 requests for other users, view general
176 ledger account codes associated with
177 commodity codes by company group,
178 company group specific business rules

END920000176US1

15

S/N 09/815,312

179 including accounting business rule
180 defaults specifying fields required to
181 be filled in by said user based on item
182 being bought;

183 each said company associated with a company group of
184 related companies;

185 common code defining workflow components common to all
186 companies within said company group, including
187 accounting validation and approval processing;

188 said user profile specifying for each said user a user
189 company and company group so as to define said controls
190 based on company and company group;

191 a resource profile provided for each said procurement
192 resource, each entry in said resource profile including
193 a resource identifier and specifying companies to have
194 access to and share said procurement resource; and

195 said user profile and said resource profiles for
196 controlling user access to said procurement resources.

13-26. [Canceled]

END920000176US1

16

S/N 09/815,312